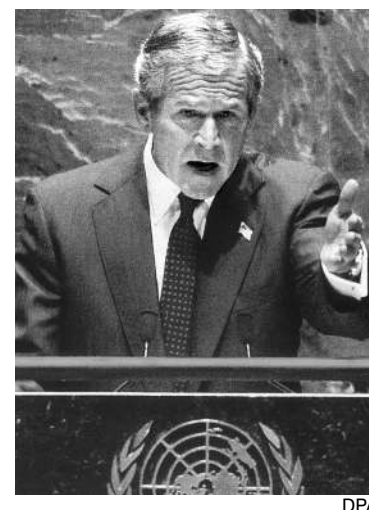




## Judith Miller and Bush Disinformation



# Big Lies and Imperialist War

### Down With U.S. Occupation of Iraq!

OCTOBER 7—*New York Times* reporter Judith Miller walked out of prison last week after being held for nearly three months for refusing to testify before a grand jury investigating the outing of CIA agent Valerie Plame. The entire time, her bosses at the *Times* portrayed Miller as a martyr in the cause of the “free press.” But in fact, Miller was freed because she had promised that she would immediately testify before the grand jury.

Many liberals and leftists took up Miller’s cause on the ground of freedom of the press. But what the Miller affair is about is not such a First Amendment right. It is about the U.S. government lies of Saddam Hussein’s “weapons of mass destruction” that were a pretext for the bloody U.S. war and occupation of Iraq, which Miller and the *Times* shamelessly purveyed.

It is today a commonplace that George Bush and his cronies are contemptible liars on a vast scale. From the myth that Saddam Hussein worked hand in glove with Al Qaeda in carrying out the criminal World Trade Center attack to the bankrupt assertion that Iraq possessed stockpiles of “weapons of mass destruction” and the fantastic notion that it was on the verge of developing nuclear weapons—no falsification was too outrageous for these cynics and their lackeys in the capitalist press if it could serve the purpose of preparing the U.S. population for the war. George Bush probably never read *Mein Kampf*, but he clearly would appreciate Hitler’s explanation that the “big lie” can be so effective because, for the common folk, “it would never come into their heads to fabricate colossal untruths, and they would not believe that others could have the impudence to distort the truth so infamously.”

Democratic Party politicians complain about how they were duped by Bush into supporting the war. But the administration’s fabrications were transparent as the war was approaching. It was the Democratic Clinton administration that paved



**U.S. troops brutalize Iraqis, April 2003. Top left: Colin Powell at UN pushing lie of “weapons of mass destruction,” February 2003. Top right: Bush beating war drums at UN, September 2002.**

the way for the Iraq war through eight years of bombing attacks and a starvation embargo. And the Democratic Party—the other party of U.S. imperialism—largely voted to grant Bush a blank check to wage war against Iraq. But then the imperialist occupation got into deep trouble. Last year, the John Kerry campaign argued that the Democrats could carry out the occupation in a more “responsible” way by looking for more support from other imperialist powers as well as the UN and deploying more troops to Iraq. Today the Democrats, even as they continue to vote for funding measures for the occupation, smell opportunities over the mounting troubles of the Bush administration: popular outrage over its handling of the Gulf Coast disaster; financial scandals embroiling Tom DeLay and other leading Republicans; the Plame investigation that has spread to Karl Rove and

other key administration figures.

In a transparent attempt to divert attention from these problems, and from his plummeting poll figures, Bush stirred the pot of the “war on terror” in a major speech on October 6. The same day, New York City imposed a “terror alert” in the subway system. Typically, Democratic Senate leader Harry Reid responded to Bush’s speech by saying that “the administration’s mishandling of the war in Iraq has made us less safe.” This is the standard complaint raised by the Democrats over Bush’s Iraq policy: that it has encouraged “terrorists” as well as diverted resources away from the “war on terror.” The repressive measures enacted after the September 11 terror attacks are the government’s attempt to carry out a qualitative diminution of democratic rights, aimed not only at immigrants but at black people and the working class as a whole.

Iraq today threatens to completely unravel under the bloody U.S. occupation. More than 4,000 civilians have been killed in Baghdad alone since April. The number of American dead in Iraq is closing in on 2,000. With the approach of the October 15 “referendum” on the Iraqi constitution, the daily toll of car bombings and other deadly attacks is increasing, as is the terror campaign carried out by U.S. forces in predominantly Sunni areas. Illustrating the farcical nature of the “referendum,” earlier this week the provisional Iraqi parliament rewrote the rules to make it all but impossible for the Sunni population, whose interests the document makes decidedly secondary to those of the Shi’ites and Kurds, to vote it down. The move was quickly scuttled as U.S. and UN officials worried that it would blow up in the face of the U.S. and its Iraqi puppets. Meanwhile, occupation authorities are preparing the show trial of Saddam Hussein. Rest assured that his rise to power through the killing of Iraqi Communists and his collaboration with Donald Rumsfeld during the Reagan administration will not be among the evidence used against him.

Such is the “democracy” that the American imperialist state, already a prison house for the black population at home, declares it has brought to Iraq. One reason that liberal politicians and newspapers such as the *New York Times* are today more openly critical of the Bush administration is that the Iraq debacle and the revelations of torture of prisoners at Abu Ghraib, Guantánamo and other U.S. military prison camps are undermining the global “war on terror” by shredding the notion that Washington is pursuing “democracy” in Iraq and Afghanistan.

In the Afghanistan and Iraq wars, the Spartacist League took a side for the military defense of these countries against imperialist attack. At the same time, we stood in irreconcilable political

*continued on page 8*

From Berlin to Moscow  
**The ICL’s Fight Against  
Capitalist Counterrevolution**  
For New October Revolutions!

Page 4



# William Bennett: A Swine for All Seasons

Republican bigwig William Bennett said on his September 28 “Morning in America” radio show: “If you wanted to reduce crime, you could—if that were your sole purpose, you could abort every black baby in this country, and your crime rate would go down.” Bennett hypocritically intoned that this would be “an impossible, ridiculous, and morally reprehensible thing to do.” But the murderous racism of Bennett’s statement was obvious—and it was unusual only for its brazen nakedness.

To the extent that the capitalist media has wagged a finger at Bennett, it was mainly for his audacity. He openly blurted out what many in the ruling class and its political establishment usually say only in private. An editorial in New York *Newsday* (4 October) scolded Bennett because

he “ventured into this area glibly and foolishly. Big mistake.” *Mistake?* Is “oops” an acceptable response to a bourgeois political insider’s expression of a Ku Klux Klan and Nazi genocidal fantasy?

Bennett’s all-sided reactionary views are matched by his deeds on behalf of the U.S. government. In the 1980s, as Ronald Reagan’s Secretary of Education, the Catholic anti-abortion bigot Bennett was a crusading general in the “culture wars,” whipping up opprobrium against people with AIDS as sinners who deserved what they got. As “drug czar” under George Bush Sr., he presided over the drive to send thousands of black and Latino youth to prison.

Bennett pulls down hefty speaking fees as a Republican spokesman for “moral values,” the theme of his *The Book of*

*Virtues*. His high-toned “cultural” facade notwithstanding, upholding racial oppression is the real motive behind Bennett’s constant plugging of anti-scientific biological determinism, which originated as a justification for slavery. It’s known as the “American school” of anthropology. The scientist Stephen Jay Gould exposed this fallacious theory, by which black people are continually denounced as “inherently” criminal or inferior, “while the corruption and violence of some congressmen and presidents provoke no similar theory” (*The Mismeasure of Man*, 1981).

In 2002, former Senate Republican majority leader Trent Lott got caught hailing Strom Thurmond’s 1948 “Dixiecrat” presidential run, an open stand by Southern Democrats for segregation. Every so often bone-deep hatred of blacks and other minorities just spills out, like Barbara Bush’s contemptuous comment that the traumatized survivors of New Orleans never had it so good, or Nixon’s obscene, bitter attacks on Jews revealed on the Watergate tapes. Like Lott, Bennett openly

expressed the deep racist contempt for and cruelty toward black people that defines the American capitalist order, whether under Republican or Democratic rule. “Genocide U.S.A.” (WV No. 463, 21 October 1988) is how we headlined a 1988 article addressing bipartisan plans to gut welfare that were promoted particularly by New York Democratic Senator Daniel Moynihan. And welfare was given its deathblow by Democrat Bill Clinton, the great pretender to partisanship of black people.

As Labor Black League spokesman Don Cane stated at a Bay Area October 1 rally initiated by the Partisan Defense Committee against government repression: “We live in a class society ruled by criminals who talk absurdities as they practice atrocities.... America’s anti-black racism is bottomless and knows no shame. America’s ruling class is dismantling education, and the racist pig Bennett gives voice to their contempt for black youth. This is a call for genocide that the workers must answer with uncompromising class struggle.” ■



TROTSKY

## Democratic Rights and the Class Struggle

*Especially in the most advanced capitalist societies, democratic forms of government serve to veil the nature of the state as a dictatorship of the bourgeoisie over the exploited and oppressed masses. Delineating three categories of rights that exist under bourgeois democracy, James Burnham, who in the late 1930s was a spokesman for the then-Trotskyist Socialist Workers Party, stressed that the rights of the working class*

*and the oppressed can be defended and furthered only through class-struggle means.*

(1) The first group consists of those special “rights” which embody and enforce bourgeois property relations. These include the right to hold property in the basic means of production; the right to employ wage labor; the right to monopolize for the sake of private profit; the right of individuals and private corporations to control the instruments of propaganda—press and telephone and radio; the right to suppress the products of science and invention in the interest of profit; and many similar “democratic rights.” Such rights as these it is the aim of the proletariat to *destroy*, in exactly the same way that the bourgeoisie itself destroyed the special feudal and slave-holding rights.

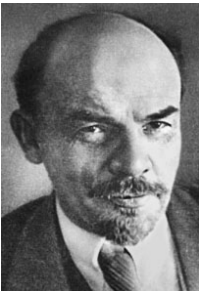
The bourgeois-democratic state, however, has as its primary function the defense and maintenance of just these “democratic” rights. Thus the struggle against these rights is identical with the struggle against the bourgeois state.

(2) There is a second group of democratic rights which, though likewise having its historical origin in the struggle for power of the bourgeoisie, has a different social status. These include many of the so-called “civil liberties”: the rights of free speech, free assembly, *habeas corpus*, petition, public secular education, etc. In bourgeois society these rights are manipulated by the ruling class to its own ends. For example, we discover that the campaign of the newspaper owners against unionization of their employees proceeds under the slogan of defense of free speech; or that the right of *habeas corpus* is used by skilled lawyers to evade investigation and criminal punishment.

Nevertheless, the attitude of the proletariat toward this second type of “democratic rights” is not one of simple and direct opposition, as in the case of the first type. This follows for two reasons: first, because, in spite of their perversion by the bourgeoisie, these rights can be used by the proletariat also in the defense of its own class interests and in preparation for its own struggle for power.... Secondly, the attitude of the proletariat toward this second group of rights is different because part of the historical aim of the proletariat is, by changing the social content of these rights and eliminating their class bias, to deepen and extend them as part of the structure of the true and genuine democracy of a classless society.

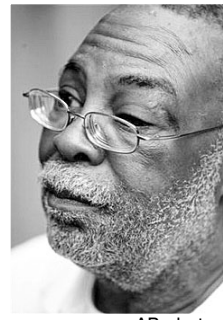
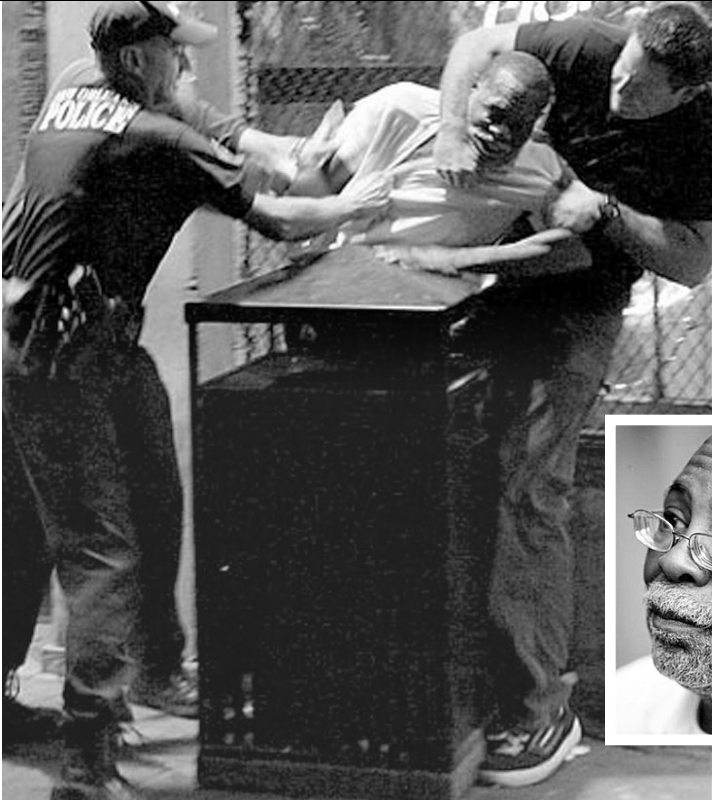
(3) There exists under capitalist democracy, to one or another extent, a third group of rights which are not, properly speaking, “democratic rights” at all, but rather *proletarian* rights. These are such rights as the rights to picket and to strike and to organize. The historical origin of these rights is in all cases to be found in the *independent* struggle of the proletariat *against* the bourgeoisie and the bourgeois state.

—James Burnham, “The People’s Front: The New Betrayal,”  
Pioneer Publishers (1937)



LENIN

## New Orleans Racist Hell



AP photos

**October 8:** Robert Davis, a 64-year-old retired elementary school teacher, was viciously beaten in the French Quarter by three white New Orleans cops, abetted by two federal officers. Davis, who doesn’t drink, was arrested on bogus charges including public drunkenness. Police roughed up an AP producer and tried to stop the videotaping of the scene. The three cops now face minor charges. Hurricane Katrina showed the world the reality of racist America. Today, under police/National Guard occupation, New Orleans remains a nightmare for black survivors.

## Letter

## Correcting a False Equation

4 October 2005

To: WV Editor

The forum “How Revolutionary Marxists Fight Against Imperialist War and Militarism,” printed in *Young Spartacus* pages in WV No. 851 (8 July), contained the following formulation: “Over the course of the past 15 years, one political generation, the political landscape on this planet has been totally reshaped by two events” and goes on to list these events as the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union and September 11.

There is a problem with this formulation: these events were qualitatively on a different scale. The destruction of the former USSR was the final undoing of the October Revolution, a profound defeat for the world working class. However striking the criminal attack on the World Trade

Center was, and however much the capitalist rulers used it to strengthen the repressive government apparatus and to further military adventures abroad, this was an event which did not fundamentally change the contours of the world, unlike the case with the destruction of the USSR. Moreover, there was a further problem in that the forum did not make the necessary link between the use by U.S. imperialism of reactionary Islamic fundamentalism during its campaign against the Soviet Union and the subsequent rise of such forces in the wake of capitalist counter-revolution. The ability of the U.S. government to capitalize on the events of September 11 was aided by the absence of the degenerated Soviet workers state.

Comradely,  
R. Henry

## WORKERS VANGUARD

Marxist Working-Class Biweekly of the Spartacist League of the U.S.

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The closing date for news in this issue is 11 October.

No. 856

14 October 2005



# Young Spartacus

## Anti-Communist Ban Defeated!

The Boston Spartacus Youth Club has waged a successful defense campaign against Boston University's anti-communist attempt to ban the Friends of the Spartacus Youth Club (FOSYC), the only Marxist group on campus. The FOSYC had been suspended on September 19 on slanderous charges of "intimidation" and "harassment," among others. On Friday, October 7, the administration reinstated the FOSYC as a student group. Some of the administration's absurd charges against the FOSYC were retailed in an October 7 article in the campus newspaper, the Daily Free Press. Dean of Students Kenneth Elmore complained to the Daily Free Press: "There have been situations where people felt coerced to take their flyers." These charges are so ridiculous they would be laughable, except that the intent is clearly to censor the socialists on campus. We fought the BU administration's blatantly political ban and won. In the course of this campaign we distributed our protest statement against the ban on campus, signed up new members to the FOSYC, gathered nearly 40 signatures on a petition demanding the reinstatement of the FOSYC and sold subscriptions to Workers Vanguard. We reprint below the September 25 statement by the Boston SYC.

\* \* \*

On Monday, September 19, Director of Student Activities Carolyn Norris, on false and unsubstantiated claims, sus-

### Boston University

pending the Boston University Friends of the Spartacus Youth Club (FOSYC). Norris indicated a "pattern of behavior over the past years" including "intimidation of University staff" and "harassing guests," "soliciting," and "non-BU affiliated people" hosting events but does not provide a shred of evidence to substantiate the claims. As for the charge that prompted the suspension, it was "illegally posting flyers in the George Sherman Union." This ban is an act of political censorship! The FOSYC is just what the name implies, a student group whose purpose is to encourage the free exchange of socialist ideas on campus. The defense of the FOSYC is an important and elementary act of self-defense for BU students, faculty and campus workers against attacks on everyone's democratic rights of free speech and political association. **An injury to one is an injury to all! Break the anti-communist ban at Boston University!**

They are starting with the Marxists, but who is next? Will women's groups on campus who are defending the right to abortion be targeted for intimidation? Will those who advocate defending black rights on campus be targeted for offending white racists? Will LGBT groups be charged with intimidation for defending

gay rights and promoting the free discussion of sexuality on campus? The banning of the FOSYC flies in the face of the right of free speech and assembly. This is an attack by the administration, acting *in loco parentis*, to regiment the campus and decide which views can and cannot be discussed.

The administration is also banning the FOSYC on a pretext that too many non-BU affiliates are present on campus. The "outside agitators" charge is a timeworn epithet of Southern white sheriffs busting Northern civil rights activists in the battle against racist Jim Crow segregation in the South. It was the Free Speech Movement, which originated in 1964 at UC Berkeley, which first succeeded in breaking the ban on "outside agitators" speaking on campus. The suspension of the FOSYC is a political witchhunt, seeking to silence Marxists, political dissidents and others with views the administration does not like.

As in other periods of political reaction, civil liberties are being dumped, this time under the guise of the Democrat-and Republican-waged "war on terror." This is a war waged against black people, immigrants, workers and leftists here at home, while the colonial onslaught against Iraq ensues abroad. For instance FBI counter-terrorism agents nationwide rounded up and harassed activists who were organizing the protests around the two capitalist party national conventions last summer. In April of 2003, at the height of the U.S. invasion of Iraq, anti-war professor Tony Van Der Meer at UMass Boston was assaulted by cops and military recruiters for defending an anti-war student. Last November, Professor Joseph Massad at Columbia University was targeted by a Zionist witchhunt, charged with "academic intimidation" for his defense of the Palestinians. *U.S. troops*

out of Iraq now! Defend the Palestinians! Down with the "war on terror"!

We have no illusions that the administrations at universities can be neutral arbiters. Under capitalism, their jobs are to maintain the bastions of privilege to train the future layers of technocrats and government officials to administer the capitalist state. It is no accident that the FOSYC was suspended in the most undemocratic way, with Norris making up her mind before hearing any response to the allegations. Attacks by the administration on dissidents are not new at BU. Under the ruthless period of John Silber's administration, the BU Five, tenured professors including Howard Zinn, were threatened with dismissal for honoring a picket line of striking campus clerical workers. Abolish the administration! To redress the race and class privilege of higher education and provide free quality education for all: **Nationalize BU and all private universities! For open admissions, no tuition and a full living stipend for all students!**

From the occupation of Iraq to the manmade devastation left in the wake of Hurricane Katrina, which left poor and black people to die, capitalism is exposed as a decaying rotten system that needs to be replaced with a planned collectivized economy. The Spartacus Youth Club's purpose is to win students to the side of the working class, which has the organization, social power and interest to carry out a revolutionary transformation of society. We fight to build a revolutionary party that acts as a tribune of all of the oppressed in the fight for a socialist future. Students have a right to be exposed to many different views on campus, including those of Marxists. Send protest letters to Carolyn Norris (cnorris@bu.edu, cc: bostonsyc@yahoo.com, Dean of Students Kenneth Elmore at dos@bu.edu), sign our petition, invite the SYC to speak at your class or student group meetings, and certainly read the "forbidden" newspaper *Workers Vanguard*. Join us in the fight against the anti-communist ban on campus! ■

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### Spartacus Youth Club Classes

#### TORONTO

**The Betrayal of the Russian Revolution: Causes and Consequences of Stalinism**  
Wednesday, October 19, 6:30 p.m.

U of T, Sydney Smith, Room 2115  
100 St. George Street  
Information and readings: (416) 593-4138  
or e-mail: spartcan@on.aibn.com

#### VANCOUVER

**The Struggle for Working Class Leadership Today: Break with the Pro-Imperialist NDP!**  
Thursday, November 3, 5 p.m.

UBC, Student Union Building, Rm. 211  
Information and readings: (604) 687-0353  
or e-mail: tlit@look.ca

**Visit the International Communist League Web Site:**  
**www.icl-fi.org**

#### CHICAGO

**The Capitalist State—An Instrument of Organized Terror**

Tuesday, October 25, 7 p.m.

University of Chicago,  
Cobb Hall, Rm. 214, 5811 S. Ellis Ave.  
Information and readings: (312) 563-0441  
or e-mail: chicagospartacist@sbcglobal.net

#### LOS ANGELES

**Capitalist Society, Classes, and the Class Struggle**  
Saturday, October 29, 2 p.m.

3806 Beverly Blvd., Room 215  
(Beverly/Vermont Red Line Station)  
Information and readings: (213) 380-8239  
or e-mail: slsycla@sbcglobal.net

#### NEW YORK

**Capitalist Society, Classes, and the Class Struggle**  
Wednesday, October 26, 7 p.m.

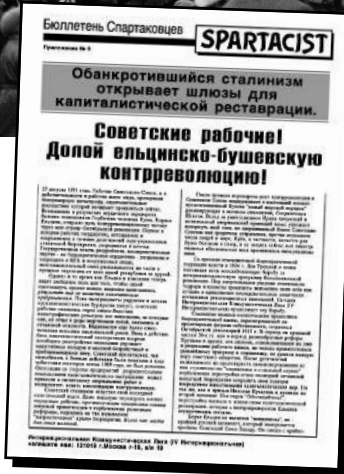
Columbia University  
Hamilton Hall, Room 703  
Information and readings: (212) 267-1025  
or e-mail: nysl@compuserve.com





Spartakist

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# From Berlin to Moscow The ICL's Fight Against Capitalist Counterrevolution

## For New October Revolutions!

We reprint below a presentation, edited for publication, given by comrade Jane Clancy at a Spartacist League/Britain educational held in London on May 21. This article first appeared in *Workers Hammer* No. 191 (Summer 2005), publication of the SL/B, British section of the International Communist League.

### WORKERS HAMMER

1989 was quite a year. The events that erupted then would come to fundamentally change the entire political landscape of the world. I will give you some snapshots of what took place. In February, the last Red Army troops were withdrawn from Afghanistan. These troops had been fighting against a reactionary cabal of Islamic fundamentalists, tribal chiefs and landowners committed to the enslavement of women and the elimination of any scintilla of social progress, and who were armed and bankrolled to the tune of billions of dollars by U.S. imperialism. The withdrawal was not because the Soviet troops were losing; this was not "Russia's Vietnam" as it was portrayed at the time. Rather, the troops were withdrawn as part of a Kremlin bid to try to appease the imperialists.

In May, hundreds of thousands of students and workers rallied in Beijing's Tiananmen Square. Singing the revolutionary workers anthem, the "Internationale," they had come out in opposition to the corruption of the Chinese Stalinist bureaucrats and the devastation wrought by their introduction of "market reforms." In June, counterrevolutionary Solidarność—the only "union" that Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan ever supported—swept the elections in Poland. The same month, Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping drowned the nascent political revolution in Tiananmen Square in blood. In July, the Soviet Union was shaken by the first ever nationwide miners strike. Provoked by the impact of market reforms on their lives and livelihoods, the miners quickly generated organisational forms of proletarian power: strike committees and workers militias.

In October, coincident with the official celebration of the 40th anniversary of the East German deformed workers state, the DDR, that country was erupting in increasingly massive protests against the

Stalinist regime of Erich Honecker. On 4 November, the largest demonstration in the country's history took place as half a million people rallied in East Berlin under banners reading: "For Communist Ideals—No Privileges," "For a German Soviet Republic—Build Soviets!" On 9 November, the Berlin Wall was opened.

The other speakers at today's day-school will provide accounts of the intervention of our international tendency—the International Communist League—into these momentous events. We fought for the defeat of the forces of capitalist counterrevolution and for the defence of the gains for the working class and oppressed of the world that were embodied in the collectivised industry and planned economy of these countries, however warped and distorted by Stalinist bureaucratic mismanagement. We fought for proletarian political revolution to oust the Stalinist traitors, whose bureaucratic stranglehold over economic, political and cultural life and betrayals of revolutionary struggles internationally in the name of "peaceful coexistence" with imperialism undermined and, in the end, paved the road to the destruction of these workers states. We fought for the revolutionary, internationalist programme that animated Lenin and Trotsky's Bolshevik Party, which led the first and so far only successful workers revolution in history in October 1917. We did not prevail, but we fought!

By 1990, the forces of capitalist counterrevolution were sweeping Eastern Europe. In 1991-1992 these forces would devour the Soviet Union, the homeland of the Russian Revolution. The world we live in today is the product of that world-historic defeat for the workers and oppressed of the world, out of which U.S. imperialism emerged as the world's unrivalled "only superpower." It is common coin now for outfits like the Socialist Workers Party (SWP) [British followers of the late Tony Cliff] and other so-called leftists to decry the deranged nuclear cowboys in the White House as the "world's biggest terrorists." True enough.

But these self-proclaimed socialists, who cheered the forces of counterrevolution in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, made their own small contribution to this outcome. Now where do they turn? To the European imperialist rulers! On the eve of the one-sided slaughter in Iraq, they appealed to the European heads of state to "give peace a chance" and stay the hand of U.S. imperialism. Now they raise the call for a "social Europe" as a counterweight to U.S. imperialism. The European rulers want a counterweight all right. They are out to increase their competitive edge, economic and military, against the U.S. To do so, they are taking it out of the hides of the working class and oppressed, savaging what remains of the so-called welfare state. The reforms collectively known as the welfare state were themselves introduced to try to piece off a combative and politically conscious proletariat and to ward off the "spectre of communism" as the Soviet Union's authority was renewed with its defeat of Hitler's Nazis in World War II.

Now you have this "Make Poverty History" campaign appealing to none other than the G8 to come to the aid of the impoverished masses of the so-called Third World. This is revealed as such a fraud by the fact that even Gordon Brown [Chancellor of the Exchequer in

the Labour government] has called on people to join the demonstration in Edinburgh this July coincident with the G8 meeting at Gleneagles. The SWP thinks this is great, as long as Brown puts his money where his mouth is, which is exactly what he

intends to do. Brown's tour of Africa earlier this year made clear that "Make Poverty History" is simply a cynical cover for increasing "free trade"—that is, the increased pillage and exploitation of sub-Saharan Africa. Declaring that it is time to stop apologising for the British Empire—not that I've noticed too many people apologising for the crimes of the empire—he saluted it as "open, outward looking and international." I believe he made these remarks in Kenya! One need look no further than the mass graves of the tens of thousands killed by British forces during the Mau Mau rebellion in the 1950s for a taste of Britain's bloody and brutal colonial heritage.

When the Soviet Union existed, the nominally independent former colonies had the breathing space to at least manoeuvre between the Soviets on one side and the imperialists on the other. No more. Now the imperialists think it's open season. Together with the total devastation and fratricidal wars that erupted in the wake of counterrevolution in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, increasing imperialist depredations and military repression from Africa to Central America to Asia have forced many thousands of people to leave their homes in order to seek a better life for themselves and their families (often just to stay alive) in

### Socialist Worker

Paper of the International Socialist Organization 25c  
May 1988

Just as socialists welcomed the defeat of the U.S. in Vietnam, we welcome the defeat of the Russians in Afghanistan. It will give heart to all those inside the USSR and in Eastern Europe who want to break the rule of Stalin's heirs.  
But this does not mean giving

ANTI-ABORTIONISTS STOP OPERATION RESCUE!

### Socialist Worker

Paper of the International Socialist Organization 25c  
September 1991

Regime's fall opens up new period of struggle  
**USSR: The old order crumbles**

Now the fight for real socialism

In the camp of imperialism: ISO welcomed Soviets' Afghanistan pullout, hailed counter-revolution in USSR.

the advanced capitalist countries. They have been met with a backlash of racist and chauvinist reaction fomented by the capitalist rulers—as the recent electoral contest between the Tories and Labour is testament to. The capitalists are happy to use these immigrants to do the dirtiest, the most gruelling and lowest paid jobs. The purpose of their anti-immigrant campaign is to keep the working class divided, pitting one against the other and all against the “foreigner.”

To this is added the “war on terror.” Here the Islamic fundamentalists who were yesterday’s allies in the imperialists’ war against “godless communism” are today’s enemies. Of course this is no war at all in any military sense. Rather, it is a political construct aimed at strengthening the capitalist state’s machinery of repression against any perceived challenge to its rule.

It is surely not the case that the Soviet Union in its Stalinist degeneration was the beacon for world revolution that it was under Lenin and Trotsky’s Bolsheviks. Nonetheless, it was a counterweight to the untrammelled ambitions of the world’s imperialists. Economically it not only demonstrated an alternative to capitalist exploitation but the superiority of a planned economy. Militarily it stayed the hand of the imperialist rulers, particularly the U.S., in the nuclear eradication of any perceived enemies. It was the military and industrial powerhouse of the states where capitalism had been eradicated. And now that it no longer exists, the imperialists have their sights aimed at the destruction of the remaining workers states—Cuba, Vietnam and North Korea; China, the largest and strongest of these states, is the big prize. All of the imperi-



U.S. military brutalizing captured Iraqis in Falluja, November 2004.

alist powers are jockeying both through economic and military means to reconquer China for imperialist exploitation.

The Chinese Stalinist bureaucracy has opened the door in whole areas of the country, the free-trade zones, to the imperialists and off-shore Chinese bourgeoisie. Their increasingly aggressive introduction of market reforms, or as they call it, “socialism with Chinese characteristics,” has eroded the gains of the 1949 Chinese Revolution. Organisations like the Socialist Party and Workers Power, who joined in the chorus of Cold War anti-Communism against the Soviet Union, now simply write off China as capitalist. But that verdict has yet to be decided. It is not a question to be observed like a bug under a glass but one of real living social struggles. And there have been a lot of such struggles by the workers and peasants of China, and increasingly so.

We are not passive observers. The lessons of our interventions against the forces of capitalist counterrevolution from East Germany to the Soviet Union arm us for the fight to defend the remaining gains of the 1949 Chinese Revolution against the forces of capitalism and for political revolution and the institution of the rule of workers and peasants soviets, based on proletarian democracy and revolutionary internationalism. The latter is the key, for the defence of the Chinese deformed workers state is an international one, linked to the fight for new October Revolutions in the imperialist centres.

Today we want to give you a picture of the revolutionary opportunities that



Soviet military parade in Moscow. USSR’s nuclear parity with U.S. helped stay hand of imperialism.

existed, before the defeats that followed, and how we fought to seize on them to advance the cause of working people internationally. Looking back at these past fights is preparation for future struggles. This is particularly important today when the idea of the proletarian socialist liberation of humanity is at best considered some kind of idealist utopia. This too reflects the impact of the counterrevolutionary destruction of the Soviet Union, which unleashed an ideological offensive by the imperialist rulers that “communism is dead” and that the destruction of the Soviet Union simply proved Marxism to be a “failed experiment.”

Consciousness has been thrown back to the extent that today there is little identification among workers between their struggles and “socialism,” however that was previously understood. For most youth, the idea that there even is a working class, much less the understanding

the business of ruling with and for the capitalist class.

The Impact of the 1917 Russian Revolution

In preparing for this presentation, I went back and re-read a speech by James P. Cannon, a founding leader of American Trotskyism, given on the 25th anniversary of the Russian Revolution in 1942, amidst the carnage of World War II and following the invasion of the Soviet Union by Hitler’s war machine. He spoke to the impact of the Russian Revolution amidst another period of reaction brought on by World War I:

“I can remember the dark days of the First World War, 1914-1918. Then as now, all the hopes for humanity’s progress seemed to be drowned in the blood of the war. Reaction seemed to be triumphant everywhere. The enemies of the proletariat gloated over the treachery and capitulation of the socialist parties [which had lined up behind their “own” capitalist rulers in the war]; and to many—to the great majority, I venture to say—the theory and the hope of socialism seemed vanished like a utopian dream. And then, as now...fainthearts and deserters mocked at those who continued the stubborn struggle and held on to the revolutionary faith. The whole world labor movement was overcome with depression and despair in 1914-1917. “But the Russian Revolution of November 7 changed all that overnight. At one blow, the revolution lifted the proletariat of Europe to its feet again. It stirred the hundreds of millions of colonial slaves who had never known political aspiration before, who had never dared to hope before. The Russian Revolution awakened them to the promise of a new life.” —“The Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of the Russian Revolution,” *Speeches for Socialism* (1971)

The October Revolution created a workers state based on workers councils (soviets). The Soviet government expropriated both the Russian capitalist and imperialist holdings and repudiated outright Russia’s massive debt to foreign bankers. It gave land to the peasants and self-determination to the many oppressed nations of the former tsarist empire. Laws discriminating against ethnic and national minorities, against women and homo-

sexuals were eliminated. The revolutionary government declared that the state had no business interfering in the consensual sexual relations of the population whatever form they took. This statement would have the “no sex please we’re British” left in this country—who go into a frenzy over our defence of Michael Jackson against the American state’s anti-sex, racist witchhunters—in an uproar.

The Soviet government proclaimed the right of working people to jobs, health, housing and education, and took the first steps to building a socialist society. But as Marx put it, “Right can never stand any higher than the material conditions on which it is based.” Today there are all sorts of new “theories” that you can win without taking power, or that the road to liberation lies through the utopia of building “autonomous” zones which somehow will be free of capitalist exploitation. But the fight for the emancipation of humanity is not some kind of mental act by good-willed, right-thinking people. Nor can it be achieved while scarcity remains, which simply perpetuates the fight for survival. As Marx understood, the eradication of the exploitation of man by man must necessarily be based on conditions of material plenty.

There is great material abundance in the world, particularly in the advanced capitalist countries. Our job is to seize that wealth, overwhelmingly created through the labour of the masses of working people, from the hands of capitalist owners who expropriate the fruits of this labour for their own profit. Only the working class has the social power—deriving from its role in production, its numbers and organisation—and the clear objective interest to eradicate the capitalist system. What it lacks is the political consciousness and revolutionary leadership to wage such a struggle. It is that critical element that the Bolshevik Party brought to the workers of Russia.

But the material conditions for the actual development of a socialist society did not exist in backward Russia, nor do they exist within the confines of any one country. From the beginning, the Bolsheviks understood that the fledgling Soviet workers state would not survive unless the revolution was extended internationally to more advanced capitalist countries. They saw the October Revolution as the opening of a Europe-wide workers revolution, and indeed at the end of the war a wave of revolutionary upheavals swept Europe. The social democrats—who had gone over to the side of “their own” imperialist rulers during the war—acted to save the rule of the bourgeoisie from the working class. The newly founded Communist parties, which had been formed in response to the example of the Russian Revolution, were too weak and inexperienced to lead these revolutionary upsurges to victory.

continued on page 6

July 1920: Lenin addresses Petrograd demonstration commemorating heroes of world proletariat during Second Congress of Communist International. Inset: First issue of journal of CI, founded in 1919.





The capitalist world surrounded and isolated the Soviet Union. From 1918 to 1920 the revolution had to fight for its very survival in a civil war, when the forces of every major imperialist power intervened on the side of the counter-revolutionary White Guards. The already backward economy was almost completely devastated through World War I and the ensuing civil war. The vibrant proletariat which had accomplished the 1917 Revolution had practically ceased to exist as a class, and famine ravished the countryside. But even under these conditions, in 1923 when an extraordinary revolutionary crisis shook Germany, the workers of the Soviet Union rallied to its cause. The German workers looked to the German Communist Party, the KPD, to lead them. But the leadership of the KPD looked to the left wing of the Social Democracy as an “ally,” and they let the opportunity for proletarian insurrection pass.

This defeat had an enormous impact in the Soviet Union, leading to a wave of demoralisation among the already ravaged proletariat. Out of these conditions of scarcity and backwardness, and the isolation of the Soviet workers state arose a conservative, nationalist bureaucracy headed by Stalin. At the beginning of 1924 this bureaucracy seized political power out of the hands of the proletariat and its revolutionary vanguard. Repudiating the very programme of revolutionary proletarian internationalism which had led to the victory of the Bolshevik Revolution, and which continued to be defended by Trotsky’s Left Opposition, the bureaucracy came up with the anti-Marxist “theory” of “socialism in one country” as the ideological justification for its rule. The bureaucracy consolidated its power by destroying the entire leadership of the Bolshevik Party through the blood purges of the infamous Moscow Trials. The Communist International was turned from an instrument for world revolution into the foot soldiers of the Kremlin’s efforts to seek “peaceful coexistence” with imperialism in the name of “building socialism in one country.”

As we wrote in “When Was the Soviet Thermidor?”—one of the early articles that we translated into Russian for our intervention into the Soviet Union—“After January 1924, *the people who ruled the USSR, the way the USSR was ruled and the purposes for which the USSR was ruled* had all changed” (*Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 43-44, Summer 1989). But this was a political not a social counterrevolution. The collectivised property forms created by the October Revolution were not destroyed but remained as gains for the workers of the world. While waging a relentless struggle against the Sta-

linist bureaucracy, the Trotskyists fought unstintingly for the defence of these gains against world imperialism and counterrevolution.

At the same time, the situation was very unstable. The rule and privileges of the Stalinist bureaucracy derived from their position on top of the Soviet workers state. But they simultaneously acted as the transmission belt for the relentless and hostile pressures of world imperialism which was committed to the destruction of the workers state. The 1938 Transitional Programme, the founding document of

World War II was the “great democratic war against fascism.” In fact, like World War I, it was an interimperialist war, a battle for markets and greater spheres of influence and domination by the imperialist powers. Like the Bolsheviks in World War I, the Trotskyists’ policy was one of intransigent defeatism towards all the imperialist bourgeoisies. This meant fighting to transform the imperialist war into a civil war—into proletarian revolutionary struggle against all of the imperialist combatants. At the same time, the Trotskyists fought for the world’s working

renewed imperialist offensive, the Stalinists moved to establish deformed workers states throughout Eastern Europe and in the Soviet-occupied East Germany as a “buffer zone.” The ruling classes, whose power had been smashed, were expropriated. However, with the exception of Yugoslavia, where Tito’s partisans prevailed in a peasant guerrilla war, these expropriations took place from without, through cold social transformations from the top down. The workers states were deformed from the outset—the mirror image of the Stalinist degeneration of the Soviet Union—as collectivised property forms predominated under the political rule of nationalist bureaucracies. The Soviet military forces were effectively the state power, and nowhere was this more true than in East Germany, which was the front-line state directly facing the imperialist West.

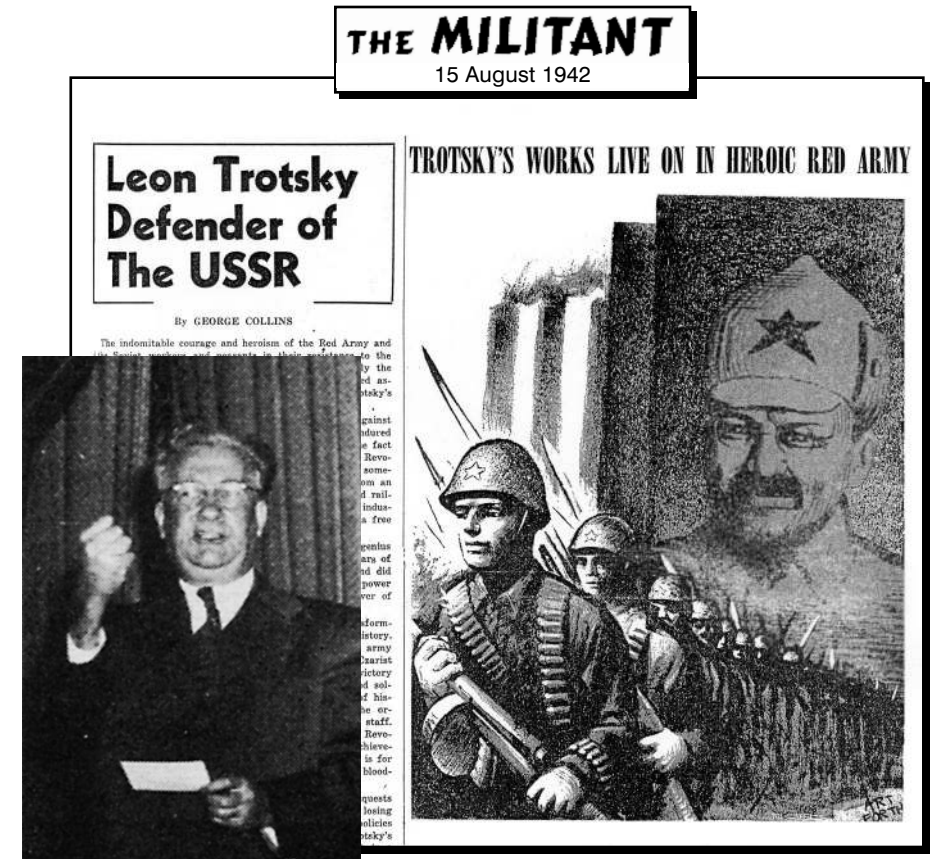
The expropriation of the bourgeoisie and the creation of deformed workers states represented tremendous gains, which we defended. But as Trotsky wrote of the earlier Soviet occupation of Eastern Poland, the central question was the impact of these social transformations on “the consciousness and organization of the world proletariat, the raising of their capacity for defending former conquests and accomplishing new ones.” There was no such consciousness and organisation of the proletariat leading to the social transformations in Eastern Europe. While the Soviet victory over Hitler’s Nazis was testimony to the continued impact of the memory of the October Revolution, this was increasingly supplanted by the Stalinist bureaucracy with a defencist national patriotism. Coming out of the war there were revolutionary situations in Italy and Greece and massive strikes in France, Belgium and other countries. But these struggles were disarmed, in some cases literally, and overall politically, by the Stalinist parties. These parties wielded the renewed authority which had accrued to them coming out of the Soviet victory to push the class-collaborationist programme of keeping class peace with the so-called “democratic” bourgeoisie. Thus, in terms of the central political criterion of the impact on consciousness, organisation and capacity of the proletariat to defend former conquests and fight for new ones, the role of the Stalinists confirmed what Trotsky had written earlier: “From this one, and the only decisive standpoint, the politics of Moscow, taken as a whole, completely retains its reactionary character and remains the chief obstacle on the road to the world revolution.”

## Cold War II and the Unravelling of “Socialism in One Country”

Economically, the Soviet Union demonstrated the vast superiority of a collectivised planned economy over capitalism. But this was distorted, limited and deformed under the bureaucracy and its dogma of “socialism in one country.” In his 1936 book *The Revolution Betrayed*, Trotsky analysed the vast contradictions of the Soviet degenerated workers state:

“It is possible to build gigantic factories according to a ready-made Western pattern by bureaucratic command—although, to be sure, at triple the normal cost. But the further you go, the more the economy runs into the problem of quality, which slips out of the hands of a bureaucracy like a shadow.... Under a nationalized economy, *quality* demands a democracy of producers and consumers, freedom of criticism and initiative—conditions incompatible with a totalitarian regime of fear, lies and flattery.”

Economic planning can be effective only when the workers identify themselves with the government that issues the plans. And to identify with the government means workers must rule through soviets. When they are alienated from the government, the plan will be subverted from the base: the formal target plans may be met, but by poor quality goods. Raw materials will be used wastefully and state-owned supplies diverted into the black [underground] economy. All of these conditions were present in the Soviet Union over the course of decades. By the late 1970s, the contradictions of “building socialism in one country” would



Trotskyist SWP of James Cannon (inset) upheld military defense of Soviet Union during World War II.

Trotsky’s Fourth International, defined the Soviet Union as a bureaucratically degenerated workers state and laid out two basic historical alternatives confronting it:

“The USSR thus embodies terrific contradictions. But it still remains a *degenerated workers’ state*. Such is the social diagnosis. The political prognosis has an alternative character: either the bureaucracy, becoming ever more the organ of the world bourgeoisie in the workers’ state, will overthrow the new forms of property and plunge the country back to capitalism; or the working class will crush the bureaucracy and open the way to socialism.”

Yet this very unstable and very contradictory situation continued on for over another 50 years. Why was that? The answer lies in the outcome of World War II.

## The Aftermath of World War II

During World War II and ever since, the lie has been peddled—as it was again at this year’s VE day celebrations—that

class to come to the defence of the Soviet Union from the blows of the capitalist enemies of whatever camp.

Trotsky had predicted, and with great justification, that World War II would shatter the bureaucracy and would provoke revolutionary upsurges of the proletariat, just as had been the outcome of World War I. Stalin did bring the Soviet Union to the brink of disaster: he beheaded the Red Army and ignored repeated and desperate warnings from heroic Soviet spies like Leopold Trepper in Nazi Germany and Richard Sorge in Japan of the imminent invasion of the Soviet Union by Hitler’s Nazis. Nonetheless it was the Soviet Union that defeated the Nazis, at the cost of well over 20 million dead. As Cannon remarked in his 1942 speech:

“[The] economic strength of the Soviet regime, and the strength of the revolutionary tradition, are being reflected now in the military field. The whole world has been surprised and astounded by the military prowess of the Red Army. All the military experts counted upon a defeat of the Russian armies in the space of a few weeks or months.... The Trotskyists were not taken by surprise. Trotsky predicted that imperialist attack on the Soviet Union would unleash marvels of proletarian enthusiasm and fighting capacity in the Red Army. He could do that because he, better than others, understood that the great motive power of the victorious revolution had not all been expended. The Red Army that the world hails is an army created by a proletarian revolution. This revolution lives in the memory of the Soviet people. That and the basic conquests, which they still retain and upon which they stand, constitute the basis upon which the Red Army has unfolded such unparalleled capacity for defense and resistance and heroic sacrifice.”

Defeating the Nazi forces in the battle of Stalingrad, the Red Army swept through Eastern Europe and straight into Berlin and smashed the Third Reich. The other regimes in Eastern Europe—overwhelmingly collaborators with the Nazis—fled to the nearest American headquarters, leaving behind a power vacuum. In the aftermath of the war, the imperialists turned on their erstwhile Soviet “allies” with the launch of Cold War I, aimed at the “containment” and destruction of the Soviet Union. In the face of this

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come dramatically to the fore.

In the early part of that decade, the Soviet Union had achieved rough military parity with U.S. imperialism, which was bogged down in its long, losing, dirty war in Vietnam. The Soviet economy also got a big boost from the rising world market price of oil. From the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s, the living standards of the population increased dramatically. The states in Eastern Europe were also beneficiaries as the Soviet Union supplied them with oil at a fraction of the world market price.

But all of this began to change in the mid-to-late 1970s. Defeated by the heroic Vietnamese workers and peasants, U.S. imperialism began to rearm itself, building up a huge military arsenal directed against the USSR, which had been the central target of the imperialists since the 1917 Revolution. This began under Democratic Party president Jimmy Carter and his “human rights” campaign for a whole cabal of Soviet dissidents. The aim here was the “moral rearmament” of U.S. imperialism, to overcome the American population’s deep distrust of the government and to refurbish the tarnished “democratic” and military credentials of U.S. imperialism.

This renewed Cold War got red hot with the intervention of the Soviet Army into Afghanistan at the end of 1979. As we wrote in our article “The Russian Question Point Blank” (*Spartacist* [English-language edition] No. 29, Summer 1980): “Afghanistan is a flash of lightning which illuminates the real contours of the world political landscape. It has exploded the last illusions of détente to reveal the implacable hostility of U.S. imperialism to the Soviet degenerated workers state. It has stripped away all diplomatic cover for Washington’s alliance with Maoist/Stalinist China. And it has confronted the left inescapably with ‘the Russian Question’: the nature of the state originating in the Bolshevik Revolution and its conflict with world capitalism. “For revolutionary socialists there is nothing tricky, nothing ambiguous about the war in Afghanistan. The Soviet army and its left-nationalist allies are fighting an anti-communist, anti-democratic mélange of landlords, money lenders, tribal chiefs and mullahs committed to mass illiteracy. And to say that imperialist support to this social scum is out in the open is the understatement of the year.”

We said: “Hail Red Army in Afghanistan! Extend the gains of the October Revolution to the Afghan peoples!”

It should have been a reflexive response for any self-respecting leftist or radical to take the side of the Red Army in a war where they were fighting not only in defence of women from barbaric reaction but the defence of the gains of the October Revolution. But overwhelmingly the generation of leftist radicals who only years earlier were marching in mass protest against the Vietnam War chanting “Ho, Ho, Ho Chi Minh” now found themselves on the side of U.S. imperialism against the Red Army. The likes of Tariq Ali, who during the Vietnam War was the epitome of “anti-imperialist” radicalism, reportedly even the model for the Rolling Stones song “Street Fighting Man,” wasn’t street fighting anymore. He was baying along with the imperialists demanding the withdrawal of the Soviet troops.

Here was a big change in political period. It had been somewhat fashionable



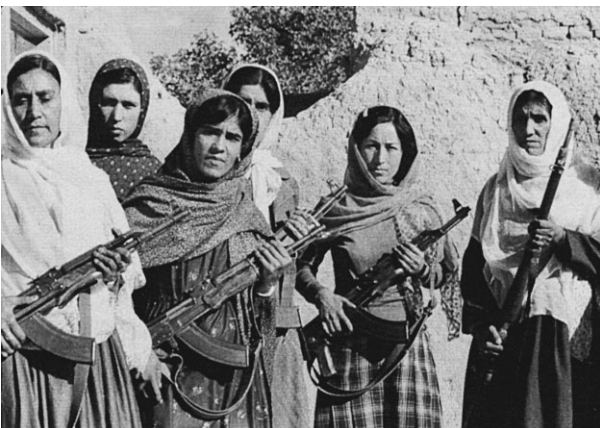
**Soviet intervention opened road to extending gains of October Revolution to Afghan peoples. Top right: Afghan women mobilized against U.S.-backed mujahedin, 1985. Right: Women, children on Kabul street, 1996, under Islamic reactionary rule.**

to be a leftist during the Vietnam War. At the time, most radicals identified with Marxism as the road to liberation, regardless of how they might have understood that. But now the winds were blowing in a distinctly different direction, as Cold War anti-Communism was the order of the day. While the left’s support for Khomeini’s mullahs in the 1979 “Iranian Revolution” was the precursor to siding with the imperialist-backed forces of Islamic reaction in Afghanistan, they really went whole-hog behind counterrevolutionary Solidarność in Poland. After all, here was a “movement” commanding the allegiance of masses of Polish workers. How had this happened?

These were the bitter fruits of Stalinist misrule, which had come to a head under the weight of burgeoning foreign debts. As I said before, in the early 1970s the Soviet Union had heavily subsidised the deformed workers states in Eastern Europe, particularly with cut-price oil as well as other raw materials. But by the mid-1970s, the oil prices were jacked up and the shipments cut down so that the Soviets could sell on the world market. This itself is a savage indictment of “socialism in one country.” At the same time, these countries were hit by a world capitalist recession, which collapsed their export markets. To maintain employment and living standards, the East European Stalinist regimes turned to the loan sharks of Wall Street, the City of London and the Frankfurt Börse. Having mortgaged their countries to the Western banks to meet their debt payments, these regimes imposed ever more severe austerity programmes dictated by the IMF. In Poland the economic crisis drove the historically socialist Polish workers into the arms of Solidarność, which was heavily backed and bankrolled by the Vatican and the CIA.

**The Gorbachev Regime**

At the same time, all the contradictions, deformities and limitations of the “socialism in one country” which Trotsky had so brilliantly analysed in *The Revolution*



Der Spiegel



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*Betrayed* were also coming to a head in the Soviet Union. Under the increasing military pressure of U.S. imperialism, and trying to preserve domestic stability at home through maintaining living standards (not to mention the bureaucrats handsomely enriching themselves), economic growth had fallen by about half under the corrupt Brezhnev regime. Here again they ran up against the limitations imposed by their own bureaucratic rule when it came to the technical and scientific innovation needed for the renewal of Soviet industry. Hostile to workers democracy and revolutionary internationalism, the only means at the hands of the Stalinist bureaucracy to raise labour productivity was to subject workers and managers to the discipline of market competition. Coming to power in 1985, the new “modernising” regime of Mikhail Gorbachev introduced *perestroika*—“market reforms.” To increase productivity, workers’ wages were geared to profitability; piece rates were reintroduced, widening income differences between workers, managers and the technical elite; factory was pitted against factory, industry against industry in the struggle for resources and consumers. It fuelled nationalism and the break-up of the USSR, pitting far richer, more industrialised areas against more backward, less industrialised ones.

Underlying this growing inequality was the appetite, especially among a layer of younger bureaucratic functionaries and intellectuals, to enrich themselves at the expense of the working class. A privileged layer, many of them the sons and daughters of the bureaucracy, envied the indulgences of their counterparts in the West. This was reflected in increasingly open expressions of belief in the superiority of Western-style capitalism.

To relieve the overhead of military expenditures in the face of the increasing military build-up of U.S. imperialism, the Gorbachev regime offered a “partnership” to the imperialists. Here Afghanistan was key, and in 1989 the Red Army

troops were withdrawn. Days before the last troops left, on 7 February 1989, the Partisan Defense Committee, the class-struggle legal and social defence organisation associated with the Spartacist League/U.S., sent a telegram to the Afghan government offering to “organize an international brigade to fight to the death” to defend “the right of women to read, freedom from the veil, freedom from the tyranny of the mullahs and the landlords, the introduction of medical care and the right of all to an education.” We anticipated drawing into this international effort the ranks of militant fighters in many parts of the globe who would see in such a brigade the opportunity to strike a powerful blow against the imperialist system by which they themselves were oppressed and dispossessed. We also saw that this could have a powerful effect among the Soviet army veterans who saw themselves as performing their internationalist duty in Afghanistan. This would have been an important lever for advancing the programme of revolutionary internationalism and proletarian political revolution within the Soviet Union itself.

Though our offer of a brigade was turned down, the Afghan government did ask if we could undertake a publicity and fund-raising effort for the embattled citizens of Jalalabad, then under siege by the bloodthirsty *mujahedin*. We raised over \$44,000, largely from working people and minorities, a number of whom had their origins in the region. But this campaign had greater significance. It showed that with the betrayal of Afghanistan, as well as developments in Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union and China, the absence of a communist party worth its name was acutely felt. And in 1989 we founded ourselves as the International Communist League.

The withdrawal from Afghanistan was the opening act of the counterrevolutionary tide that would engulf Eastern Europe and then the Soviet Union itself. In 1992 this was admitted by Eduard Shevardnadze, then Soviet foreign minister, who said: “The decision to leave Afghanistan was the first and most difficult step. Everything else flowed from that” (*Washington Post*, 16 November 1992). Less than a year later, the Kremlin bureaucrats would pull the plug on the East German deformed workers state, giving the green light for capitalist annexation of the DDR by the Fourth Reich of German imperialism. This will be addressed in the remarks of other speakers here today.

I will simply conclude where I began. Our fight to defend the gains that were embodied in these workers states, however warped and deformed by Stalinist misrule, and our fight today in defence of China and the remaining workers states was and is part of our struggle for new October Revolutions. As Trotsky said: “Those who cannot defend old positions will never conquer new ones.” The period we live in now, one conditioned by the destruction of the world’s first workers state, is deeply reactionary. But the lessons of past struggles are the ammunition for arming new cadre for the struggles that can and will break out. Out of such struggles will further be steeled the cadre for building a revolutionary, internationalist proletarian vanguard—the crucial instrument for the socialist liberation of humanity. ■



Peter Turnley

**Left: Chinese workers join students at Tiananmen Square, May 1989. Right: Migrant workers in Beijing barricade construction site demanding unpaid wages, January 2003. Proletarian political revolution is key to defending and extending gains of 1949 Revolution.**



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# Big Lies...

(continued from page 1)

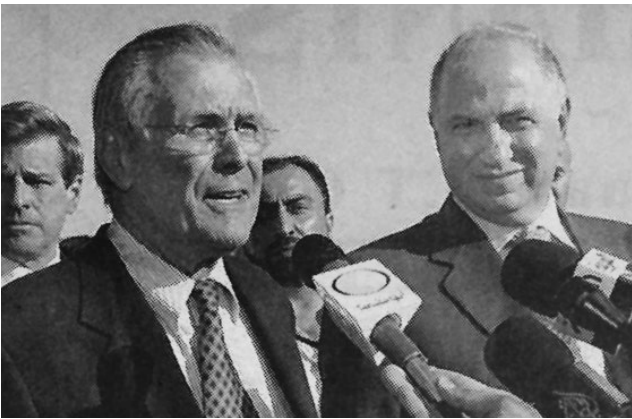
opposition to the reactionary Afghan Taliban and the capitalist regime of Saddam Hussein, both former allies of U.S. imperialism. We demand the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all U.S. troops from Iraq and Afghanistan. Insofar as fighters in Iraq aim their blows against the imperialist occupiers and their Iraqi security forces, we call for their military defense against U.S. imperialism. However, we vehemently oppose the fundamentalism, indiscriminate terror and communal violence as the opposite of everything we Marxists stand for.

Growing opposition in the U.S. population to the Iraq occupation, revulsion over the government's role in the death and destruction of black people and the poor after Hurricane Katrina, anger at the attacks on fundamental democratic rights—the situation speaks to the burning need to build a workers party that would organize *class struggle* against the U.S. capitalist rulers. The fight against imperialist war cannot be separated from the struggle against the capitalist system that breeds such war. Only when the multiracial proletariat seizes power from the blood-drenched, arrogant capitalist rulers can we begin to speak of a world rid of imperialist wars and occupations and offering material security and social justice for all.

## War Lies and More Lies

Deceit, manipulation and cynical “spin” are not the bailiwick of a handful of especially venal politicians; they are part of the normal workings of a political system whose purpose is to protect the profits and rule of a tiny class of exploiters from the masses of the population they exploit

**Times flack Miller, embedded with Army “WMD” search unit in Iraq, was mouthpiece for Bush’s war lies. Pentagon chief Donald Rumsfeld with prime Miller “source,” Ahmad Chalabi, in 2003.**



first day on the job in 1964, Ellsberg witnessed how Democratic president Lyndon Johnson fabricated out of whole cloth a phony “attack” on U.S. naval forces in the Gulf of Tonkin. This provided the pretext for a massive escalation in U.S. bombing and ground forces in Vietnam. Ellsberg recalls how on August 4 Johnson and McNamara

“informed the American public that the North Vietnamese, for the second time in two days, had attacked U.S. warships on ‘routine patrol in international waters’; that this was clearly a ‘deliberate’ pattern of ‘naked aggression’; that the evidence for the second attack, like the first, was ‘unequivocal’; that the attack had been ‘unprovoked’; and that the United States, by responding in order to deter any repetition, intended no wider war. “By midnight on the fourth, or within a day or two, I knew that each one of these assurances was false.”

The method was classic: Before Hitler attacked Poland in 1939, he had SS troops dressed in Polish uniforms stage a fake attack on the then-German city of Gleiwitz. The Nazi blitzkrieg against Poland was then presented by Hitler as a “counterattack.”

Within three days of the Tonkin Gulf “incident,” Congress—including virtually

by the Spartacist League and the Partisan Defense Committee on behalf of Jose Padilla, a U.S. citizen who was seized as an “enemy combatant” at Chicago’s O’Hare airport in May 2002 and who remains in government custody without charges. As the brief stated:

“American history is replete with examples of outright fabrications and manipulation of truth used to coerce a reluctant populace to go to war and justify other military depredations. Americans marched into this country’s first imperialist slaughter, the 1898 Spanish-American War, under the blood-curdling call to ‘Remember the *Maine*,’ based on the fiction that the battleship *Maine* was blown up by an enemy mine. In truth the explosion was caused by a faulty construction design.”

The Hearst press played a forward role in mobilizing public support for that imperialist war. Less than two days after Spanish sailors had helped pull survivors from the sea, the *New York Journal* (17 February 1898) declared that the *Maine* “was split in two by an enemy’s secret infernal machine.”

U.S. entry into World War II was also prepared through government duplicity. In order to reverse isolationist sentiment, Democratic president Franklin D. Roosevelt deliberately provoked the Japanese into attacking U.S. military forces, thereby assuring U.S. imperialism’s entry into the war. Many historians believe that the administration knew the attack was coming and did nothing about it in order to make it that much easier to declare war. As part of a deluge of racist war propaganda, *Time* magazine described the U.S. response to Pearl Harbor as “Why, the yellow bastards!” The snooty *New York Times* chimed in after one battle to describe the enemy as “a beast which sometimes stands erect.”

At the close of the war, President Truman dropped two atom bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki despite knowledge that the Japanese were already trying to surrender. This was both an act of pure racist spite and an attempt to intimidate the Soviet Union and affect the postwar world order. Throughout the anti-Soviet Cold War, journalists for the *New York Times* and other major newspapers worked hand in glove with the CIA, passing information from pro-imperialist “dissidents” and others inside the Soviet bloc to Langley and Washington.

## Truth and the Times

As the Pentagon Papers were being published by the *New York Times* in June 1971, Richard Nixon’s aide, H. R. Halde- man, told the president: “The implicit infallibility of presidents, which has been an accepted thing in America, is badly hurt by this, because it shows that people do things the president wants to do even though it’s wrong” (Daniel Ellsberg, *Secrets*). One year later, Nixon was up to his neck in the Watergate affair, which was triggered when burglars under the president’s orders broke into the Democratic Party’s National Committee offices. With Democrats and even some Republicans clamoring for his head, Nixon resigned in August 1974 under the threat of impending impeachment.

Why did the same capitalist press that loyally parroted every lie uttered by the Bush White House about Iraq defy the president back then? Where did the Democrats, so supine in the face of Bush’s Iraq war, find the backbone to cross swords with Nixon? By the late 1960s the bourgeoisie was deeply split over the

Vietnam War. A growing defeatist wing saw the war as a loser for U.S. imperialism and wanted to cut their losses. Nixon was also called to order because he had broken the unwritten rules of the game by using against the capitalist Democratic Party the sort of “dirty tricks” that the FBI had long employed against leftists and black militants.

In 1998, the Republican right spear-headed a drive to impeach Democratic president Clinton for a consensual sexual affair. The Democrats have raised no such calls in regard to Bush despite his record of murderous lies over Iraq. Even John Dean, who served as White House counsel during the Watergate affair, says Bush should be impeached for lying about Saddam Hussein’s supposed weapons of mass destruction. The capitalist rulers, Democrats included, generally do not tamper lightly with the imperial presidency. Moreover, there is broad agreement in the ruling class that to pull out of Iraq now would be an unacceptable sign of weakness and vulnerability. And whatever their feelings about particular provisions of the USA Patriot Act, Democrats are fundamentally at one with the Republicans on the “war on terror.”

George W. Bush certainly does not feel any more constrained by bourgeois legal and political norms than Nixon did. A case in point is the leaking of the identity of CIA agent Valerie Plame. It is a violation of the bourgeoisie’s own rules to out their secret agents. The leak was retaliation by the administration for an op-ed piece by Joseph Wilson, former U.S. ambassador to Gabon and Plame’s husband, who blew out of the water Bush’s lies about a supposed Iraqi nuclear weapons program. Appearing in the *New York Times* (6 July 2003), the article revealed that in early 2002 Wilson had been sent by the CIA to Niger in an effort to verify Saddam Hussein’s attempt to obtain yellow-cake uranium. Upon his return, Wilson informed both the CIA and the State Department that there was no such attempt. Following Wilson’s piece, right-wing columnist Robert Novak revealed Plame’s identity.

As a result of the investigation into the source of that leak, Judith Miller was imprisoned for contempt of court for refusing to testify about her alleged contact with an administration official, now revealed to be I. Lewis Libby, Vice President Cheney’s chief of staff. Miller was and is a most unlikely standard-bearer



**Democratic Johnson administration fabricated August 1964 Gulf of Tonkin incident to escalate Vietnam War. Early the following year, Johnson launched massive bombing campaign against North Vietnam.**



and oppress. Describing how the bourgeoisie conducts its foreign policy, Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin noted in his 1918 polemic *The Proletarian Revolution and the Renegade Kautsky*: “In no bourgeois state, not even in the most democratic, is it conducted openly. The people are deceived everywhere, and in democratic France, Switzerland, America and Britain this is done on an incomparably wider scale and in an incomparably subtler manner than in other countries.”

Daniel Ellsberg’s autobiographical *Secrets: A Memoir of Vietnam and the Pentagon Papers* (2002) provides a fascinating insider’s account of the endless lies manufactured by the government to conceal its aims from the populace, especially when it comes to waging war. Ellsberg recalls how, shortly after he took a job under Defense Secretary Robert McNamara during the Vietnam War, he received an urgent telephone call: “A Blue Springs drone has gone down in China. Bob is seeing the press at eighty-three. We have ten minutes to write six alternative lies for him.”

Repulsed by the horrible crimes carried out by the U.S. in Vietnam, Ellsberg in 1971 courageously made public a trove of secret documents, dubbed the Pentagon Papers, documenting over two decades of government lies and cover-ups. From his

every one of the Democrats who would later be prominent fixtures on reformist antiwar platforms—approved a resolution authorizing Johnson to “take all necessary steps, including the use of armed force” in Southeast Asia. Claiming that the fall of the U.S. puppet regime in South Vietnam would have a “domino effect,” leading to all Southeast Asia being swallowed up by Communist “totalitarianism,” the U.S. imperialists waged a counterrevolutionary war against the North Vietnamese deformed workers state and its allied National Liberation Front in South Vietnam. The imperialists sought to suppress the struggle of the workers and peasants both against colonial domination and for social revolution and even had plans to nuke North Vietnam, which could not be carried out for fear of Soviet nuclear retaliation. The war ended in a defeat for U.S. imperialism that, for a period, demonstrated to many Americans that this country’s rulers are neither good nor omnipotent. Furthermore, the Soviet degenerated workers state had been able to achieve rough nuclear parity with the U.S. These factors helped stay the hand of American imperialism from embarking on further military adventures.

We wrote about the government’s history of deception in the service of war in the July 2003 *amici curiae* brief issued

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for the notion of a free and independent press. Soon after the September 11 attacks, Miller began churning out stories about nuclear and chemical weapons sites in Iraq allegedly retailed by shadowy Iraqi defectors.

An 8 September 2002 *New York Times* article by Miller and *Times* military affairs correspondent Michael Gordon promoted the story that aluminum tubes procured by Iraq were intended for production of atomic bombs. What Miller and Gordon presented as undisputed fact was being debated even in U.S. intelligence agencies. In fact, the aluminum was used for rocket components. A 12 November 2002 *Times* article by Miller implied that Iraq was preparing to use nerve gas against U.S. troops. A Miller “exclusive” in the 3 December 2002 *Times* was headlined: “C.I.A. Hunts Iraq Tie to Soviet Smallpox.”

When the war began in March 2003, Miller was the *only* reporter embedded with the U.S. military’s Mobile Exploitation Team (MET) Alpha, whose mission was to find evidence of WMDs. Miller flaunted her connections to the military brass and Bush administration, and in one incident forced the reversal of an Army commander’s order withdrawing the unit from the field. In April, she told the *News-Hour with Jim Lehrer* that MET Alpha had found “more than a ‘smoking gun’... what they found is a silver bullet,” an Iraqi scientist who claimed firsthand knowledge of chemical and biological weapons. Miller further claimed that they had found “building blocks of what you would need to put together a chemical or a biological weapon.”

After it was clear to all that this was a pack of lies, the 26 May 2004 *Times* ran



Culver

**1898: U.S. troops landing on Cuba’s Daiquirí Beach during Spanish-American War. Hearst press spread jingoist lie about destruction of Maine as pretext for imperialist war.**

a major statement from the editors claiming that “editors at several levels” were not sufficiently skeptical of tales provided by “Iraqi defectors,” thus providing fall guys for Gordon and Miller (who is not even mentioned in the *Times*’s “confession”). Miller and her superiors at the *Times* no doubt saw her imprisonment as a way to refurbish their tarnished credentials. But even the deal she cut with federal prosecutor Patrick Fitzgerald that got her out of jail is raising some eyebrows. Miller was made to testify only about her discussions with Libby to the grand jury investigating the leaks about Valerie Plame. Miller, however, never even wrote about Plame. As Russ Hoyle, a former senior editor at *Time* and the *New York Daily News*, wrote in a 2 October online article, “Whose Skin Is Judith Miller Really Trying to Save?”:

“The chattering classes so far have completely ignored the possibility that what Miller is so determined to protect may have nothing to do with the Plame case. “It may, however, have plenty to do with I. Lewis ‘Scooter’ Libby...whom Miller met with on July 8, 2003 and spoke with at least once more that week, along with other unnamed officials, after her return from Iraq and the unsuccessful U.S. search for Saddam’s weapons.



Imperial War Museum

**As Soviet Commissar of Foreign Affairs, Leon Trotsky, shown arriving at January 1918 Brest-Litovsk talks with Germany, oversaw publication of tsarist regime’s secret treaties.**

*And it may have everything to do with protecting the White House officials who leaked classified intelligence—not about Valerie Plame to Robert Novak in the summer of 2003—but to Miller herself about Iraq’s allegedly reconstituted nuclear weapons program in September 2002”* (emphasis added).

### Democratic Rights and the Working Class

Among the leftists who took up Miller’s cause was the Internationalist Group which, while noting her role as “a conduit for official disinformation,” headlined its article “Free Judith Miller!” and called her jailing “an ominous attempt to throttle the press” (*Internationalist*, July 2005).

by Miller was not some whistle-blower who needs protection from vindictive government higher-ups, but those selfsame higher-ups, the Bush administration.

As Marxists, we look at all issues, including questions of democratic rights, from a proletarian class standpoint—the standpoint of the interests of the working class in furthering the struggle for socialist revolution. The jailing of journalists has a chilling effect on free speech, but this is not the central issue in Miller’s case. Her right to not divulge her sources is decidedly secondary to the need for the fullest possible exposure of the Bush administration’s lies, which she duly retailed, that served as the pretext for the colonial war of occupation of Iraq. Such exposure aids in further tearing through the “national unity” hysteria whipped up after the September 11 terrorist attacks. The climate of unity against “terrorism”—unity extending from the Republicans and Democrats to the trade-union bureaucracy and civil liberties organizations—goes a long way to explaining the lack of struggle against Bush’s wholesale attacks on democratic rights and the labor movement.

Take the case of Wen Ho Lee, an American nuclear scientist originally from Taiwan who was subjected to a witchhunt and arrested in December 1999 on frame-up charges, castigated in the press as a possible spy for the People’s Republic of China. Lee eventually filed a civil suit claiming that Justice Department, FBI and Energy Department officials had leaked information about him and his family to the press when he was under investigation for allegedly spying for China. In August 2004, four reporters were held in contempt of court for refusing to name confidential sources for their articles on the case, which helped create a climate of hysteria around the supposed “Chinese spy.” Lee’s right to uncover the truth in his case outweighs the right of the journalists to maintain “confidentiality.”

Under bourgeois democracy, which is simply one, historically conditioned form of capitalist rule, democratic rights exist, in the first instance, for the benefit of the capitalists. The extension of democratic

rights to the rest of the population, and in particular to the oppressed black masses, has required massive social and class struggle and even civil war. As we wrote in the Programmatic Statement of the Spartacist League/U.S. (“For Socialist Revolution in the Bastion of World Imperialism!”, November 2000):

“Despite the hypocritical preachings of ‘democracy for all,’ the only rights to which the bourgeoisie is unalterably committed are those which enforce its property relations—the right to hold private property, to own the basic means of production, to employ wage labor, etc. Those specifically proletarian rights which may exist under bourgeois democracy—like the right to picket, to strike, to organize unions—are wrested from the bourgeoisie and maintained only through the independent action of the proletariat. Even broader democratic rights (free speech and assembly, trial by a jury of one’s peers, etc.) are secured under capitalism, especially for working people and the oppressed, through social struggle and are eminently reversible in the absence of such struggle.”

The manifold discontents in this society need to be directed against the capitalist class enemy, with the social power of the multiracial proletariat mobilized on behalf of all the exploited and oppressed. For such a struggle to go forward to victory, it is necessary to forge a workers party to lead a socialist revolution that breaks the power of the bourgeoisie and establishes workers rule.

One of the first orders of business of a workers government would be to open the files of the former capitalist government and publicize the truth behind its lies and secrets to the world’s working people. This was precisely what the Soviet workers state under V. I. Lenin and Leon Trotsky did shortly after the Bolshevik Party led the working class to power in the October Revolution of 1917. The publication by the Bolsheviks of the secret 1916 Sykes-Picot treaty, in which the British and French imperialists conspired to carve up the Near East following World War I, had an electrifying effect across the region. This contributed to a series of national revolts and popular uprisings triggered by the Bolshevik Revolution in the broad swath then occupied by British forces from Egypt to Iran. In 1919, the Soviet government made public and annulled the secret treaties imposed by the tsarist regime on China and renounced Russian claims in Manchuria. This helped further the anti-imperialist May Fourth Movement, out of which came a number of those who would form the Chinese Communist Party.

In his 1938 pamphlet “Their Morals and Ours,” Trotsky wrote of Lenin’s Bolshevik Party: “Wherever it could, it, of course, deceived the class enemies; on the other hand it told the toilers the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Only thanks to this did it succeed in winning their trust to a degree never before achieved by any other party in the world.” Telling the toilers the truth was and is key to advancing revolutionary consciousness in the proletariat, whose historic destiny is to be the gravedigger of the capitalist system of exploitation, oppression and imperialist war. ■



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# Lash-Up...

(continued from page 12)

supporter is Bill Clinton, who as president supported the 1995 “atonement” rally and now tells the black newspaper *Amsterdam News* (10 May) that the Millions More March “is a very positive idea.” This is the man whose response to the Gulf Coast disaster was to rush to the side of George W. Bush, along with Bush Sr.

Whatever their words about “class independence,” the work that the Million Worker March Movement is doing today to channel anger at Bush among trade unionists and black people into the Democrats is what the MWMM was set up to do in the first place. In building the October 2004 “Million Worker March” in Washington, D.C., Chris Silvera, secretary-treasurer of New York Teamsters Local 808, called it “a crucial vehicle for voter mobilization. The timing of it, coming two weeks before the election makes the march the cheapest, most effective get-out-the-vote initiative ever undertaken by the Teamsters and the AFL-CIO.” We summed up this outfit at the time in our headline, “Million Worker March: Tail of Lesser-Evilism” (WV No. 831, 3 September 2004). It is a sign of the demoralization of the labor misleadership that, coming off Kerry’s defeat, its “left”



Reuters

Georgia unionists rally in support of UPS Teamsters strike, 1997.

components are doing the donkey work for the anti-working-class, reactionary demagogue Farrakhan. But it’s not just the left-talking types: Teamsters president James P. Hoffa has also thrown his support behind Farrakhan’s march.

## Rubbish Recycled

Trying to clean up his act, Farrakhan is trumpeting a call for “unity with our Brown, Red, disenfranchised and oppressed Brothers and Sisters in America, Caribbean, Central and South America, Asia and all over the world.” But this march is truly rotten garbage in recycled pails. As Farrakhan did ten years ago, the Millions More Movement today offers the rulers the benefit of the division of the oppressed into antagonistic sectors while promoting religious superstition, which feeds anti-woman, anti-gay bigotry and preaches guilt and appeasement instead of struggle.

4 December 1964
Muhammad Speaks
10 April 1964

By Minister Louis X  
(Boston, Mass.)

**“TO FOLLOW MALCOLM IS TO BE DOOMED”**

If any Muslim—whether he be an Imam or just a rich man—backed a fool like Malcolm in building a Mosque, he would be a fool himself. Only those who wish to be led to hell, or to their doom, will follow Malcolm. The die is set, and Malcolm shall not escape, especially after such evil, foolish talk about his benefactor (Elijah Muhammad) in trying to rob him of the divine glory which Allah has bestowed upon him. Such a man as Malcolm is worthy of death, and would have met with death if it had not been for Muhammad’s confidence in Allah for victory over the enemies.

**Farrakhan: the man who wanted Malcolm X dead. Nation of Islam condemned Malcolm X in months before 1965 assassination. Farrakhan (then Louis X) declared him “worthy of death.”**

One of the ten listed “issues” of the Millions More Movement is “Atonement, Reconciliation and Responsibility” in the “name of our God (The One Creator).”

Farrakhan also, as always, offers bankrupt notions of black capitalism. We

(*Workers World*, 29 September).

A “theme of unity” with gays and women? For the Nation of Islam, homosexuality is a “sin.” When Farrakhan looks at oppressed black women, he sees a slave in the kitchen who should go to hell for having an abortion. In a 22 August *Final Call* article titled, “Women Mobilize for the Millions More Movement,” Farrakhan sneers, “Today you hardly know how to boil an egg and you want to get married. Women have become a top breadwinner.... The woman is in a degenerative state.” The social backwardness at the core of the Millions More March was reconfirmed by the vile remarks of Washington, D.C. Baptist Reverend Willie Wilson, national executive director of the march, who ranted in a July 3 sermon that “lesbianism is about to take over our community” and that black families are breaking up because women are making more money than men.

Lamenting Wilson’s comments as “unfortunate” was the International Socialist Organization (ISO). But whatever the ISO’s misgivings, its newspaper *Socialist Worker* (22 July) calls the march a “desperately needed response to the myriad of attacks that African Ameri-

cans have endured” and states that “organizers promise that this year’s mobilization...will be different—and will welcome women and gays, socialists and others who support its goals.” This is a shameless apology for anti-gay, anti-Semitic bigotry. A key organizer of the march is all-purpose bigot Malik Zulu Shabazz, protégé of the now-deceased, equally demagogic Khallid Muhammad. Shabazz gained widespread attention in 1994 when he gave a warm-up speech for Muhammad that blamed “the Jews” for everything from killing Nat Turner, the leader of an 1831 slave rebellion, to controlling the Federal Reserve.

## For a Revolutionary Workers Party!

Last month, Million Worker March organizers including Thomas and Silvera joined Shabazz, Wilson and Farrakhan to meet with Hurricane Katrina survivors in Houston. Shortly after Silvera’s return, he spoke at the September 15 New York City united-front rally initiated by the Partisan Defense Committee in defense of Lynne Stewart, Mumia Abu-Jamal and Assata Shakur and against “war on terror” repression. Saying that “the time for revolution is here and now,” Silvera had nothing to say about actual class struggle, instead calling on the audience to go to Washington for Farrakhan’s march.

In the discussion period, a TWU Local 100 transit worker responded to Silvera (who had to leave the meeting early). After speaking of the need to mobilize labor to “get rid of this rotten system and set up a system that’s actually operated for human need,” the unionist addressed the treacherous role of the labor bureaucrats in abandoning any real struggle in the past period, for example by not backing up the embattled AMFA mechanics on strike against Northwest Airlines, and stated:

“They just can’t resist support to Democratic Party lesser-evilmism because that’s what’s ‘realistic.’ The Million Worker March in 2004 was seen, and Chris said it, as the best vehicle to get out the vote for Kerry—the guy who said he could run the Iraq war better, the guy who’d really prosecute the war on terrorism. Our union has gone and endorsed [NYC Democratic Party mayoral candidate] Fernando Ferrer. This is the guy who said it’s not a crime to pump 41 bullets into Amadou Diallo. And what about the rest of them: Abner Louima, Michael Stewart, Eleanor Bumpurs—the list is

# L.A. Cops Beat NOI Official Hands Off Tony Muhammad!

*We print below a September 19 letter by the Partisan Defense Committee to the Los Angeles City Attorney.*

On August 25, LAPD officers beat and arrested yet another black man in Los Angeles. It would normally go unreported, but this time the victim was Tony Muhammad, western regional director of the Nation of Islam. His battered and swollen face provided ample proof of police brutality. *Los Angeles Sentinel* publisher Danny Bakewell said on Muhammad’s behalf: “The attack was unprovoked. He was wrestled to the ground, pepper-sprayed in his face, and once he was on the ground he was kicked brutally and punched in the mouth.” Eyewitnesses have given similar accounts.

Muhammad’s beating follows a string of recent police shootings and attacks on the black and Latino residents of Los Angeles. In 2002, black teenager Donovan Jackson-Chavis was brutally battered by Inglewood cops. The two main perpetrators went free and then last January were awarded \$2.4 million! Shortly thereafter, the L.A. County District Attorney announced that no charges would be brought against the cops who beat Stanley Miller. Three days later, in

February, the LAPD shot dead Devin Brown, an unarmed black 13-year-old. In May of this year, L.A. County sheriffs turned black Compton into a free-fire zone as if they were an occupying army. In July, the LAPD SWAT team blew away a 19-month-old Latina baby, Suzie Peña, as they gunned down her father in a hail of bullets in Watts. The official contempt for black life demonstrated in New Orleans has long been enforced here in L.A. by the brutal everyday cop treatment of blacks and Latinos.

Those who protest the police also become targets. Muhammad’s vicious beating by the cops occurred at a vigil for Nahun Beaird in Hyde Park, during which mourners protested police harassment of the vigil. The LAPD grotesquely claims that Muhammad joined a “mob assault” on two cops (neither of whom were injured) and Chief Bratton wants him charged with misdemeanor battery on a police officer. This is a blatant attempt to justify the cops’ own thuggery. The “mob assault” was by vengeful police who *later* arrested and assaulted Muhammad. The Partisan Defense Committee demands: No charges against Tony Muhammad or the other protesters!

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**NEW YORK**



# Puerto Rico...

(continued from page 12)

Pesquera stated in his findings: “The reason why the FBI did not permit doctors onto the scene at his home is because they wanted Filiberto dead. In my opinion Filiberto was shot by an FBI sharpshooter and allowed to bleed to death—this was an assassination by the FBI.” And it was directed from Washington. According to the *New York Times* (28 September), a government official said: “Senior F.B.I. officials in Washington had approved decisions made at the scene. Mr. Mueller [FBI director] was out of town...but was kept apprised of the situation as it developed.”

The coldblooded execution of the Puerto Rican independence fighter was a chilling display of what the government’s “war on terror” is all about. On September 24, a thousand protesters marched to the Federal Courthouse in San Juan chanting, “FBI—fascists, the real terrorists” and “Comrade Filiberto, your death will be avenged.” Two days later, nearly a thousand students, led by the Pro-Independence University Federation, occupied the main tower of the University of Puerto Rico and removed the U.S. flag, replacing it with a banner in honor of Ojeda. Pro-independence groups served as an honor guard at Ojeda’s wake and funeral. Tens of thousands waited in line to view his body in San Juan, and thousands lined the entire route to his hometown, where he was buried. The Spartacist League participated in a protest on September 26 in New York City, one of several across the U.S. mainland.

Even many Puerto Ricans who oppose independence and advocate that Puerto Rico become a U.S. state consider the execution of Ojeda to be a calculated blow to Puerto Rican national pride. The people of Puerto Rico have deeply contradictory feelings: on the one hand, the

huge in New York City alone. You cannot support the Democrats and fight cop terror, and the labor movement has to fight cop terror and take up the fight to free Mumia Abu-Jamal, as was done in 1995 when the death threat came down, with a big labor-centered mobilization in conjunction with international protest.... That’s the kind of thing that has to be done, and it won’t be done by these labor misleaders.”

In lending support to Farrakhan and his reactionary black nationalism, the “progressive labor activists” are directly undermining the very purpose of the unions: to unite workers in struggle against the bosses. On its Web site, the MWMM hails Farrakhan’s march as “a very important vehicle for convening a national Black united front to help reunite the fragmented forces of the African American liberation movement and to help facilitate the unity of Black workers.” The article by Thomas and Shoup in *Workers World* declares: “We have to speak to and fight for working class control of economic development, including control of investment and community development.” The unity the MWMM embraces is not that of the multiracial

This pamphlet assesses recent changes in the world economy in a historical perspective, from the origins of modern imperialism in the late 19th century through the capitalist counterrevolution in East Europe and the former USSR and its aftermath. Reformist ideologues of “globalization” seek to obscure the role of the capitalist nation-state and the danger of interimperialist war which is inherent in capitalism, while amnestying the refusal of the labor bureaucracies to wage class struggle against their respective bourgeoisies.

Exploitation, poverty and social degradation can be eliminated only through proletarian revolutions in the imperialist centers as well as the neocolonial countries, laying the basis for an international planned socialist economy.

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**Helicopter involved in FBI operation that brutally killed Ojeda Ríos.**

massive protests which forced the Navy to stop its bombing exercises at the U.S. base in Vieques in 2003 and the outrage against the FBI murder of Ojeda show that the Puerto Rican people have a strong sense of nationhood; on the other hand, there is a fear that independence would mean sinking to the level of poverty of their Caribbean neighbors, and a large percentage of the Puerto Rican population resides on the mainland.

Filiberto Ojeda Ríos was a young musician in Chicago when the Cuban Revolution inspired him and he became a fighter for Puerto Rican independence. In 1961 he traveled to Cuba, and from there he returned to Puerto Rico. In 1967 he founded the Armed Revolutionary Independence Movement. In 1976 he was a founding member of the Puerto Rican Workers Party, and two years later he organized the Ejercito Popular Boricua, known as “Los Macheteros” (The Cane Cutters). Los Macheteros carried out attacks against the imperialist government apparatus, such as a 1981 bombing that destroyed nine military airplanes at the Puerto Rican Air National Guard

working class in struggle against racist capitalist rule. Accepting the framework of the capitalist system, the MWMM’s black nationalist outlook advocates unity with black entrepreneurs, their spokesmen like Farrakhan and black bourgeois politicians. This perspective can only reinforce the racial divisions fostered by the capitalists to weaken the working class.

What is needed is a new labor leadership, based on a program of class struggle and the political independence of the working class, that would mobilize the unions’ power in the fight for black freedom. There must be a political struggle to break labor and blacks from the Democratic Party and to forge a multiracial revolutionary workers party. Acting as the “tribune of the people,” such a party would fight in defense of *all* of the oppressed: for full citizenship rights for all immigrants, for free abortion on demand, for full democratic rights for gays. Only by replacing the blood-drenched, irrational capitalist system with a workers government can there be genuine social equality. ***For black liberation through socialist revolution! ■***

base, at a time when Puerto Rico was a staging ground for counterrevolutionary operations against Sandinista Nicaragua and elsewhere in Central America.

In 1985, FBI dragnets resulted in the arrest of Ojeda and 12 other Macheteros on RICO [Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations] “conspiracy” charges. That roundup was part of an earlier edition of an “anti-terrorist” campaign, as U.S. imperialism sought to regiment the American population amid a war drive against the Soviet Union and U.S.-sponsored proxy wars against supposed Soviet “surrogates” in Nicaragua and El Salvador. Ojeda wounded a police agent in the course of his arrest, but in 1989 a jury in Puerto Rico recognized that he acted in self-defense and acquitted him. In 1990, awaiting transfer back to the U.S. to be tried for a 1983 robbery of a Wells Fargo depot in Connecticut, which had been carried out by the Macheteros to fund the independence struggle, Ojeda cut his electronic bracelet and went underground. In 1992 he was convicted *in absentia* and sentenced to 55 years in prison. While underground, Ojeda remained an ardent *independentista*, conducting interviews with journalists and issuing annual taped statements for El Grito de Lares, including on the day of his killing.

Last April the FBI raised its bounty on Ojeda to \$1 million (which it is reportedly now paying out to the finks). In May they put the same bounty on the head of former Black Panther Assata Shakur who, like Ojeda, is targeted for fighting against racist American capitalism. Assata escaped from prison hell in the U.S. in 1979 and has been in exile in Cuba since 1984. Hands off Assata Shakur!

The Spartacist League joins other

opponents of U.S. imperialism in outrage over Ojeda’s assassination. We intransigently defend the right of self-determination for Puerto Rico, the principal remaining colony of the U.S. We support complete political freedom for advocates of independence to organize, and we demand freedom for all those who remain imprisoned for fighting for Puerto Rican independence. But the nationalist guerrillaism pursued by Ojeda and the Macheteros is no way forward for the Puerto Rican workers. The fight for socialist revolution, the only road to ending exploitation and imperialist domination, necessarily entails a political struggle to break the Puerto Rican working class from false, nationalist unity with the local bourgeoisie.

We seek to unite Puerto Rican workers and the multiracial working class in the U.S. in common struggle against U.S.



**SL at New York City rally in defense of Puerto Rican nationalist prisoners, July 1999.**

imperialism, from Central America to the Caribbean and the U.S. We fight to forge Trotskyist parties to lead the workers to power both on the mainland and in Puerto Rico. A victorious workers revolution in the U.S. would immediately free Puerto Rico and all other nations subjugated by U.S. imperialism and establish relations with them on the basis of their freedom to exercise their national self-determination. ***FBI, CIA, U.S. military out of Puerto Rico! For the right of independence for Puerto Rico! ■***

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# WORKERS VANGUARD

## The Millions More March

# “Progressive” Union Bureaucrats and Farrakhan: A Cynical Lash-Up

The murderous abandonment of black New Orleans in the wake of Hurricane Katrina graphically displayed the capitalist rulers’ racist contempt for black people. The catastrophe, resulting from decades of misrule and neglect by both Democrats and Republicans, demonstrated what the statistics have revealed for years: that material conditions for the mass of the black population today are not fundamentally better than they were at the time of the civil rights struggles of the 1950s and ’60s. Today the state of public education and health care in the U.S. is about on a par with the Lake Pontchartrain levees. And in the U.S., for black people the abuse and impoverishment is always compounded by the racial oppression that is the cornerstone of the capitalist system.

In the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, we wrote in “New Orleans: Racist Atrocity” (WV No. 854, 16 September):

“The masses of displaced people must be provided with jobs—*union jobs* at union wage scales, with health care, housing, clothing and all other necessities. Instead of being regarded as victims, these working people can be incorporated into a force for their own revitalization.... There is one and only one force in American society that can change the current political balance in favor of working people: a revitalized labor movement.”

Even to meet the basic needs of the working people—for jobs for all, for quality, integrated housing and education and medical care for all—requires sharp class struggle against the capitalist profit system. This means a fight for the independence of the working class from the capitalist government and its political parties. The working people need their own party—a multiracial revolutionary workers party that fights for a workers government. Crucial to the struggle to sweep away the American capitalist system is the understanding that the emancipation of black people is integral to the emancipation of the entire working class.

But the current leadership of the labor



Top (from left): Teamsters’ Chris Silvera, ILWU’s Clarence Thomas, Louis Farrakhan, former AFSCME official Brenda Stokely, Workers World’s Larry Holmes. “Millions More Movement” commemorates reactionary 1995 march for black “atonement.”



movement accepts the framework of this racist profit system and harnesses the unions to the capitalist parties, especially the Democrats, crippling working-class



power through the lies that putting the “lesser evil” in office and lobbying the government are the vehicles for change. The labor tops’ class collaboration means

accommodating, or even promulgating, the most backward racism and anti-immigrant bigotry.

Posing as an alternative to the mainstream pro-capitalist labor tops are some left-talking union officials who organized the Million Worker March Movement (MWMM) last year. An article in *Workers World* (8 August) by

Clarence Thomas, International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 10 executive board member and MWMM spokesman, and United Auto Workers Local 1981 member Larry Shoup talks of the “politically bankrupt Democratic Party” and declares, “Workers must break with this sellout party and form an independent political party by and for the U.S. working class.”

Fine words. But what the MWMM is doing is lashing up with the anti-woman, anti-Semitic demagogue Louis Farrakhan and his “Millions More March”! This rally, called for Washington, D.C., on October 15, will commemorate the pinnacle of Farrakhan’s career, the 1995 Million Man March for “atonement.” We denounced this reactionary, racially exclusionist mobilization in “Million Man March Appeals Racist Exploiters” (WV No. 631, 20 October 1995):

“They forgive the oppressors and exploiters for their enormous crimes against black people, working people and poor, while blaming the oppressed for their oppression. *To hell with atonement!* What’s needed is integrated class struggle to fight for the liberation of black people and all the oppressed.”

A host of Democratic politicians, starting with Jesse Jackson and Al Sharpton (both of whom signed on to the initial call) and including the Congressional Black Caucus, has endorsed this year’s march, hoping to further the Democrats’ electoral fortunes as outrage over New Orleans and the bloody occupation of Iraq fuels popular opposition to the Bush administration. Another prominent

*continued on page 10*

## For the Right of Independence for Puerto Rico!

# Protest FBI Killing of Filiberto Ojeda Ríos!

On September 23, dozens of FBI agents, equipped with helicopters, military vehicles, machine guns and sniper rifles, gunned down 72-year-old Puerto Rican independence fighter Filiberto Ojeda Ríos. Aided by the Puerto Rican police, who closed off the roads, the FBI stormed Ojeda’s property in the rural town of Hormigueros, firing over 100 rounds. Ojeda responded with ten rounds, and one agent was wounded. Ojeda then negotiated for the safety of his wife, Elma Beatriz Rosado. She later recounted: “After an extended period, they blindfolded my eyes, and it was then, at that moment that I felt in my heart and knew that they were going to execute him.... They murdered him.”

After shooting Ojeda, the FBI let him bleed to death. For

at least 12 hours, as blood seeped under Ojeda’s door, the FBI refused to enter the house, and doctors, family members, lawyers, and independence activists who pleaded to enter the house were kept away. Over 24 hours after the attack, the FBI finally announced that they had killed Ojeda.

The FBI’s ghastly killing of Ojeda on September 23, a day known as El Grito de Lares to commemorate an 1868 revolt against Spanish colonial rule, sparked angry protests and aroused nationalist sentiment throughout Puerto Rico. As outrage mounted, Puerto Rican governor Acevedo-Vilá ordered that Dr. Hector Pesquera, associated with the Hostos National Independence Movement, be allowed to witness the autopsy.

*continued on page 11*



Filiberto Ojeda Ríos, shown outside Connecticut courthouse in 1988.